GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1769
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2017
Cheating of Indian Professionals
Kesineni Shri Srinivas

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of support mechanisms provided by the Government for Indian citizens lured to the Gulf countries with promises of high-paying jobs who end up with menial jobs;

(b) whether the Government has taken the issue of mistreatment of blue-collar workers from India with Gulf countries and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether thousands of unpaid Indian workers in Saudi Arabia have been successfully brought back to India and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of the further diplomatic options taken by India to prevent such situation in future?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) The institutional framework for support and welfare of overseas Indians has been considerably strengthened over the last few years. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), the MADAD Portal, e-Migrate system, shelter homes, etc. are some of the important mechanisms to expeditiously assist Indian nationals abroad. Shelter Homes for distressed Indian nationals have been set up in Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Missions in Gulf countries also conduct Open Houses on regular basis where workers can convey their grievances. There is a mandatory insurance and medical cover under Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna for all Indian workers holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) Passport having Emigration Clearance for going to 18 notified ECR countries for overseas employment. The Yojana has been strengthened for the benefit of such workers.

(b) Complaints of mistreatment are received, from time to time, from Indian emigrant workers in 18 notified ECR countries regarding violation of contractual terms, adverse working conditions, wage related issues, employer related problems, medical and insurance related problems and compensation/death claims. Immediately on receipt of such complaints, the same are forwarded to the concerned Indian Mission/Post abroad for taking them up with the host Government authorities on priority for urgent redressal/resolution within the ambit of MOUs signed with the Gulf countries. Wherever necessary the Ministry/Mission takes up the matter with the respective Government.

(c) Owing to economic slowdown in Saudi Arabia due to weak oil prices, there was delay in payment of salaries to the workers and in some cases, salaries had not been paid for several months. There have also been retrenchments due to closure or downsizing of the companies. The Indian nationals working with two major Saudi companies, viz., Saudi Oger and SAAD Group, Dammam, had reported, around the middle of 2016, to the Embassy that they were not being paid for the last several months; and that in some labour camps food was also not provided for some days. The Government took up the matter of these workers with the concerned Saudi authorities. As a result, the Saudi Government arranged resumption of food supply to the affected camps, provided exit visas and one way return ticket to India, to most of the affected workers, seeking return to India. Our Embassy in Riyadh has repatriated 3016 workers and our Consulate in Jeddah has sent back 1973 workers to India till 18.07.2017.

(d) The Government is working in close coordination with foreign Governments to address concerns related to employment and welfare of Indian workers. Labour and Manpower Cooperation Agreements/MoUs are already in place with Jordan, Malaysia and the six Gulf countries. These Agreements/MoUs provide the institutional framework for comprehensive discussions and review of these matters from time to time in the periodic meetings of Joint Working Groups.